

PN

2598

17

F3

LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO

PN

2592

I7

F3



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

PRICE SIXPENCE.

THE

FASHIONABLE TRAGEDIAN



A CRITICISM.

WITH TEN ILLUSTRATIONS.

EDINBURGH & GLASGOW:
THOMAS GRAY AND COMPANY.



THE
FASHIONABLE TRAGEDIAN:
(Henry Irving)

A CRITICISM.

With Ten Illustrations.

THOMAS GRAY AND COMPANY,
13 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH;
316 BUCHANAN STREET, GLASGOW.

MDCCCLXXVII.

EDINBURGH :
THE ST. ANDREW'S STEAM PRINTING WORKS,
13 GEORGE STREET.

THE FASHIONABLE TRAGEDIAN.

O actor of this, or indeed of any other, age has been so much and so indiscriminately belauded as Mr Henry Irving. For more than five years he has been the “bright particular star” of the British dramatic firmament. Night after night has he filled the dingy old Lyceum, from the front row of the stalls to the back row of the gallery, with audiences which applauded every jerk, every spasm, every hysteric scream—we had almost said every convulsion—in which he chose to indulge. In the provinces he has met with the same success and the same laudation. Newspaper “critics” have ransacked and exhausted their by no means limited vocabulary in the search for words in which to express his greatness. He is, we are told, the resuscitator of all the past glories of the British drama, with the addition of new glories peculiarly his own. He is the “interpreter of Shakespeare to the multitude,” the apostle of popular dramatic culture. Criticism has not been entirely silent, it is true, but its voice has been drowned in the plaudits of enthusiasm. Men of science, men of learning, poets, philosophers, vie with each other in singing his praises. Bishops eulogise him in after-dinner speeches ; statesmen “tap him on

the shoulder while walking down Bond Street," and introduce themselves to him with expressions of enthusiastic admiration; peeresses engage the stage-box night after night to gaze at his contortions.

Here are a few of the most frequently-recurring details of eulogy:—Imprimis,—He is the most intellectual of all actors. Other actors have been rude, untutored, mechanic boors, compared with this learned Theban who studies the commentators, and writes in reviews. They may have had their flashes of genius, it is true, but for the intellect which can "create" a character throughout we must come to Mr Irving. Item,—He is original—he does not cling to stage tradition, but invents new conceptions of character, new modes of expression, new arrangements of text. Thirdly,—He is picturesque in attitude, motion, and



REMORSE.

bearing, and vivid in expression. Fourthly,—He is master of a psychological subtlety hitherto unknown in histrionic art. He lays bare the very quivering nerves of the characters he "expounds" and "illuminates." Fifthly,—He elaborates his performances to an un-

precedented extent—every motion of the fingers, every

elevation of the eyebrows, every protrusion of the lower jaw being carefully studied and contributing towards a well-defined end. Sixthly, and for the present, lastly,—He is possessed of a most delicate and exquisite taste, which presents Shakespeare precisely as he should be presented—without superstitious adherence to text, and yet without Gothic mutilation of it.

It is not our purpose to examine these separate items of laudation very minutely. Some of them we think wholly unjustified, and others true only in a limited sense. For the present, we shall defer our examination of them, and may even, for the sake of argument, grant that they are all true. Even after this excessive admission we believe it by no means difficult to prove, beyond the possibility of rational contradiction from any one who is not entirely blinded by fashion, that Mr Irving is in fact one of the worst actors that ever trod the British stage in so-called “leading” characters.

Two points must be premised. In the first place, it must be remembered that we are speaking of Mr Irving *as he is*, and as he has been for two or three years; not as he was before long runs, indiscriminate adulation, and several other circumstances had exaggerated his inherent defects, and destroyed what he undoubtedly possessed—the germs of a good and even great actor. His Digby Grant was excellent. His first performances of Mathias in “The Bells” were certainly wonderful. Even up to his first appearance as Hamlet his faults had not grown upon him to any morbid extent. It is from the marvellous “200 nights’ run” that his degeneration dates, and since then his course down-hill has been rapid and fatal.

The second point to be premised is that we write entirely without personal feeling. The severity of our strictures is certain to bring upon us accusations of



PICTURESQUENESS.—Phase I.

personal and professional spite. That these are unmerited the following facts may show:—We have no personal knowledge of Mr Irving, have had no communication of any sort with him, and indeed never saw him except on the stage. Moreover, we have no professional connection with the stage; our knowledge of it is gained entirely from the front of the house. Nor have we been influenced in any way by rival artists; our acquaintance among

actors is confined to one, and he is one of Mr Irving's warmest admirers. These simple facts may perhaps be sufficient to convince the reader that our criticisms do not proceed from personal spite or professional jealousy.

So much by way of preface; let us now come to the gist of our argument.

The first requisite for histrionic greatness is power to move and speak like a normal and rational human

being. A man may have intellect, "picturesqueness," taste, and all the rest of it, but if he walks like an automaton whose wheels need oiling, and speaks alternately from the pit of his stomach and the top of his head, he will never be a great, or a good, or even a passable actor. Can it be denied that Mr Irving does all this? In walking, he plants one foot upon the stage as if his whole "eminence" depended upon its firmness, and then drags the other leg after it in a limp and nerveless fashion, which cannot be described, and must be seen to be appreciated,—all the while working spasmodically with his shoulders, and very often nodding his head backwards and forwards in a manner which is positively painful to contemplate. In speaking, again, his naturally harsh voice is rendered still more unpleasant by his trick of alternating between *basso profundo* and *falsetto*, like a ventriloquist imitating a conversation between the Giant Cormoran and Jack the Giant-killer. Moreover, his pronunciation of English is a study in itself. It is—

"After ye scole of Richardson his showe
For common Englysche is to him unknowe."

The following is a list of a few of his vowel changes—changes, by the way, unknown to Grimm's Law. "A" as in "call" becomes "ää." "Ay" as in "day" becomes a sound which is best represented by the German modified "ä." "E" as in "slept" becomes "ä." "I" as in "night" becomes the diphthong "ei." "Ö" becomes "aw," and "ö" becomes "ü." "U" as in "cup" becomes "ä," and "oo" becomes "ü," with many other pleasant metamorphoses, until one is tempted to say of the English language as

Quince said of Bottom, "Bless thee! Bless thee, thou art translated!" There is said to be an actor on the English stage who can make four syllables of the word "blood," by pronouncing it "ber-a-lud-a." In no particular instance, perhaps, does Mr Irving quite attain to this height, but his "transmogrification" of his mother tongue is as thoroughgoing as it well can be.

As a specimen, we have translated the first four lines of Gloster's soliloquy from the English of Shakespeare into the English of Mr Irving:—

"Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glawrious summer by this sun of Yark;
And ääll the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep buzzum of the awshun—burrèd."



DIGNITY.

Take, too, the following from "Charles I." :—

“ I knew a wumman once that kapt a sekkret,
One tauld it her about the fãäll of nün,
And still she kapt it until saapper-bell ;
And, wondrous wumman, till she went to bad !
Her gassip was to come hot-foot i’ the marn—
I do not sää she would have tauld it then—
Poor saul ! she never tauld it—
That neit she deid ! ”

It is absolutely impossible to represent Mr Irving’s pronounciation with the ordinary letters of our English alphabet ; we should have to invent new characters unknown even to the phonetic system.

Can any actor be great who cannot pronounce his own language ? He may be as intellectual as Bacon, and as subtle a psychologist as George Eliot herself, but he will still be a very bad actor. There have been many actors who have overcome physical defects by sheer force of genius. Edmund Kean, and Garrick himself, are signal instances. In Mr Irving, however, there seems to be none of the divine flame which could make “ Pritchard genteel, and Garrick six feet high.” Apart from his fatal mannerisms of motion and speech, he has physical defects which nothing but the most marked genius could hide. A weak, loosely-built figure, and a face whose range of expression is very limited, are the two principal disadvantages under which he has had to labour. Abject terror, sarcasm, and frenzy are the only passions which Mr Irving’s features can adequately express. When he drops his lower jaw and turns up the whites of his eyes, he certainly looks as if some direful ghost had been freezing his young blood by telling the secrets of its prison-house ; and when he raises his chin, curls his under-lip, and elevates his eyebrows, the sneer so produced is inexpressibly diabolic. The other phases

of feeling and emotion are entirely unknown to his face. His figure, again, utterly precludes the possibility of dignity, grace, or even ease. A humourous critic has complimented Signor Salvini on his success in portraying the ravages of indigestion: some of Mr Irving's most effective attitudes might well be taken for a representation of the last stage of Asiatic cholera—that is, total collapse. In “Hamlet,” for instance, after the disappearance of the Ghost, we feel the dire necessity of his requesting his sinews to “grow not instant old, but bear him stiffly up,” for the uninitiated spectator, who does not know that this is one of the beauties of Mr Irving's “style,” must feel anxious lest some important part of his internal economy should have given way altogether. After the play scene, again, he shows his emotion by falling upstairs into the throne, where he lies sunk together in a bundle so fearfully and wonderfully nerveless as to remind one painfully of the puppet Punch when not



DESPERATION.

engaged in his stirring drama, but reposing in his box. All who have had the privilege of seeing Mr Punch in

private life must recognise the resemblance. Sometimes, on the other hand, his legs seem too much for him, and go "skating away with him" like the boots of the marionette Napoleon whom Dickens describes so vividly. This is the case in the last Act of "Macbeth," where, with the shriek of "At least we'll die with harness on our back," the grey-haired reprobate clears the whole breadth of the Lyceum stage—no very narrow one—in literally three bounds, holding his sword meanwhile as if he were profoundly desirous of impaling himself upon it the moment he got behind the scenes.

In short, so far from struggling against and mastering his natural defects, he has merely exaggerated them, until his admirers have come to look upon them as the beauties of his "style," a view to which he himself appears to incline, since, in one of the "little speeches" to which he so often treats his audiences, he congratulated himself laughingly that "for some time the critics had let his legs and his voice alone."

Let us now glance at the minor counts of our indictment, using the different items of adulation which we have noticed, as pegs upon which to hang them.

His much-lauded INTELLECTUALITY is not worth quarrelling about. It is of course very satisfactory, in the present low state of culture among actors, to possess a tragedian who can write in advanced reviews, read essays on the drama, make neat self-laudatory speeches at dramatic dinners, occupy the president's chair of a literary institute, and who is, in short, qualified to shine at temperance soirees and "æsthetic teas." We have come across several of Mr Irving's lucubrations, and have as yet failed to

discover any signs of transcendant genius in them. They seemed, to put it mildly, a little commonplace; but we can safely grant him all "eminence" in intellectual respects. That admission does not affect our argument, which is merely to prove that he is a very bad actor.

ORIGINALITY is the second of the qualities for which he has been eulogised, and in a certain sense it cannot be denied him. The secret of much of it lies, however, in the forehead, chin, neck, shoulders, and legs, which we have already described. No one possessed of these eccentric members could be other than "original" in his execution—that is to say, he must of necessity act as no one ever acted before him, and, let us hope, as no one will ever act again. As for his originality in arrangements, readings, &c., it must be granted that he is possessed of a spirit of innovation which is not always misdirected. Some of his readings are ingenious, though very few of them are strictly original; and even where they are not improvements upon traditional interpretations, they are always to a certain extent interesting. Space forbids our entering into a minute discussion of his readings, and a few other remarks connected with his originality will fall naturally under the heads of Psychological Subtlety and Taste.

Mr Irving's PICTURESQUENESS and VIVIDNESS are very strong points with his admirers. An enthusiastic gentleman in Liverpool has devoted a pamphlet to a review of his "picturesque impersonations," in which he discovers that "Richard III." is the noblest outcome of the Gothic mind, and that Mr Irving's genius is essentially Gothic. Hence it is that "without the

exercise of conscious volition he can strike at once the key-note of Shakespearean play," and that "in him the works of our tragical Titan seem to storm the heavens and threaten to tear the world from off its hinges; and yet . . . to possess the insinuating loveliness of the sweetest poesy." Truly this is praise such as *Touchstone* might well call "laid on with a trowel." It is somewhat beside the question, so far as his picturesqueness is concerned, but we have quoted it here because the author lays special stress on that quality in his very title page. Here again, his personal peculiarities are the true cause of much of his reputation. People see a man moving, standing,

*SUSPICION.*

and attitudinising on the stage as no actor, and, what is worse, no human being, ever did before,

and they at once call him vivid and picturesque. There are those who would discover picturesqueness in the writhings of the octopus in the Brighton Aquarium. Mr Irving's ecstatic critics would do well to remember that "picturesque" and "grotesque" mean entirely different things, though their last syllable is the same. When they use the former term they probably mean the latter—we will hope so at any rate, for the sake of their critical reputation. The picturesqueness of his Othello has been admirably described as follows in a rhymed criticism which appeared in a journal whose outspoken opposition to the fashionable mania forms not its smallest claim to public favour :—

“ For I dare not repeat
The things that were said—
Of a mop-stem on feet,
In one weekly I read—
With its arms like a pair of pump-handles,
And the mop dipped in ink for the head.

And another remarked
That his voice wasn't clear.
And the more the Moor barked,
The less could he hear ;
Whilst a third likened him in the death-scene,
To a curate whose dreams had been queer.”

This, of course, is a caricature, for the journal in question, apart from artistic principles, does not love Mr Irving. At the same time it must be remembered that Mr Irving's "picturesqueness" is such that the fairest picture of it, whether by pen or pencil, looks like a caricature. Perhaps the most genuinely picturesque points of his playing are his fights. His fencing in "Hamlet" was admirable, though that of Mr Leathes as Laertes was even better; and his com-

bat in "Macbeth," while it would no doubt have gladdened the hearts of transpontine "gods," was particularly well managed, as stage fights go. In "Richard III.," however, he degenerated. "One, two, three—over—one, two, three—under" was the style throughout, until the supreme moment arrived, when Mr Brooke gently insinuated his sword under the tyrant's arm, and, with hardly sufficient force to pierce a piece of paper, *ran him through the steel breast-plate*. At this, and at Mr Irving's savage bite at the sword as it was drawn out, we must do the Lyceum audience the justice to say that they "laughed consumedly."

We now come to the great point of panegyric—his PSYCHOLOGICAL SUBTLETY. "Profound student of human nature" is one of the mildest terms addressed to him by his latest eulogist—a writer in the "Dublin University Magazine"—whose fulsome adulation must surely be sickening even to Mr Irving himself, but who, in the above phrase, is merely condensing what hundreds of other critics have said before him. Not to burden our argument, we may grant to his studies of murder, mesmerism, and nightmare the praise of psychological subtlety, and confine our remarks to his Shakespearean impersonations.

To begin with his Hamlet. The first question in the conception of Hamlet's character is his madness. Was it real or assumed? We can hardly expect an actor to settle a question which has exercised Shakespearean students at all times, but we do expect to get some hint of the existence of his madness, whether real or not. There can be no doubt that Hamlet either was, or feigned to be, mad. Will it be believed

that Mr Irving gave no hint of any madness whatever in his reading of the character, and from first to last made Hamlet as sane as he possibly could? He omitted the words addressed by Hamlet in his wild excitement to the Ghost, when it adjures Horatio and Marcellus to swear secrecy, and he omitted the wildest words uttered at the end of the play scene. These



PICTURESQUENESS.—Phase II.

most important clues to the state of Hamlet's mind were altogether missed, and it would have been impossible for anyone seeing the play for the first time, to imagine that the gloomy, sneering, and generally unpleasant Prince of Denmark was anything but most objectionably and uncomfortably sane. That Mr Irving made him weak-minded, far be it from us to deny, but the deficiency in mental power was not that of a great mind unsettled but of a weak and hysterical nature in perfect sanity. In the scene with Polonius, for instance, this most gentlemanly and refined actor behaved with such marked rudeness and deliberately sane impertinence (and that to so dignified a Polonius as Mr Chippendale) that he suggested nothing so strongly as a rude overgrown schoolboy insulting his guardian. In the great scene with Ophelia, on the other hand, he

reversed the above comparison, and reminded one of the tyrannical guardian in a farce ordering off the innocent heroine to a boarding-school. The peculiarly milk-and-watery nature of his Ophelia made his bullying of her—there is absolutely no other word for it—seem even more gratuitously ungentlemanly. All this may be very psychologically-subtle, but we should be inclined to apply to it a shorter and uglier term, and call it vulgar.

Even the critic who opines that Mr Irving's Richard III. "seemed to storm the heavens and threatened to tear the world off its hinges," can scarcely stomach what he calls his "craven view of Macbeth." Nor is it to be wondered at. Whatever were his crimes, Macbeth was a soldier and a brave one. Mr Irving's psychological subtlety made him a writhing poltroon. The whole performance was liker a horrible nightmare than a Shakspearean tragedy, but it must be admitted that this effect was as much owing to Miss Bateman's Lady Macbeth as to Mr Irving himself. If the actual Lady Macbeth was in any way like Miss Bateman's representation of her, one cannot wonder that her unhappy husband was driven to the most horrible of crimes, only that suicide would certainly have been his first idea. Especially absurd were the scenes in the witches' cavern, and in the banqueting room. The last act was an improvement upon the rest, but on the whole, Mr Irving's psychological subtlety and picturesqueness are much more adapted to shine in the First Witch than in the crime-laden king.

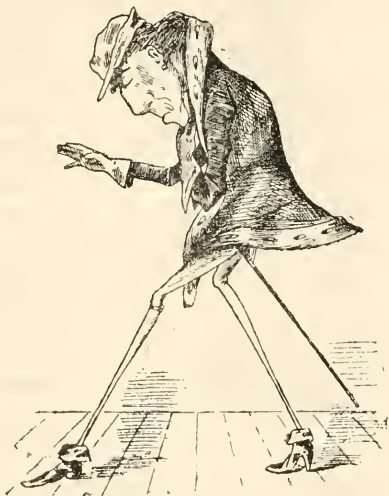
To discuss the psychological qualities of Mr Irving's Othello would be a mere waste of space. It is in many respects the most trying of Shakespeare's cha-

racters, and Mr Irving's failure in it was simply ghastly. Even his most indiscriminate admirers are remarkably quiet on the subject. A critic, who is evidently trying to say all he can for it, can find nothing to say but that "in the last act we *almost* forget Mr Irving in Othello." If there ever was such a thing as "damning with faint praise," this is it. His Dublin eulogist says very satirically, "that Mr Irving should play Othello after Signor Salvini was a dire offence." It was—against common sense; but if the "critic" means that the unfavourable verdict pronounced on Mr Irving's Othello was in any way affected by such a cause he is entirely wrong. Comparison between Salvini and Mr Irving was, of course, unavoidable, but it was at the same time impossible. To compare the noble dignity of the great Italian with the physical and intellectual feebleness of Mr Irving is to compare the sublime and the ridiculous. Mr Irving's failure in Othello would have been equally pronounced if Salvini had never been heard of. If he "tore the world off its hinges" in "Richard III." he tore the passions of the Moor to tatters in "Othello." It was such a fiasco that even by dint of laborious puffing the British public could not be tempted to admire it, or even to invest its superfluous cash in going to see it.

The critics have generally pronounced his Richard III. to be his most successful part, and, for once, we have the satisfaction of agreeing with them. The causes are not far to seek. His natural figure and walk required but little alteration to enable him to represent the usurper to the life. Moreover, he for once left his "originality" in the background, and played more or less according to tradition. Whether

it was the result of psychological subtlety, however, or merely of deficient executive power, he certainly failed to convey any impression either of the tremendous mental power of Shakespeare's Richard, or of the dignity which should be apparent through all the bodily deformity. In the scene with Lady Anne over King Henry's body,

he played as if it were a joke between him and the audience. His attempt to cajole the lady would not have deceived a cookmaid. It seemed to amuse him, and it certainly amused the audience; but



PERSUASIVENESS.

how a high-born lady, unless she was sadly deficient in mental endowments, could be talked over by the sneering, wriggling hypocrite he appeared, passes mortal understanding. Throughout the play he conveyed no idea of the magnitude of the stake for which he was playing. Mr Irving may be able to exhibit the remorse and terror of a hysterical murderer, but he never was a Plantagenet playing for a crown.

So much then for his psychological subtlety. If it be this which makes of Hamlet a weak-minded puppy, of Macbeth a Uriah Heep in chain armour, of Othello

an "infuriated Sepoy," and of Richard III. a cheap



HYPOCRISY

Mephistopheles, all we can say is, the less we have of psychological subtlety on the English stage the better.

ELABORATION is the only virtue which we can freely and without qualification concede to Mr Irving. But this concession amounts to very little. To say that he elaborates his performances is merely to say that he does not insult the public by appearing in half-studied parts. This was aptly pointed out

by a writer in "Macmillan's Magazine," at the time when the critics were lauding him to the skies for his "elaborate" study of Hamlet. It shows to what a low level British dramatic art has fallen, when the merest commonplace conscientiousness is considered a perfect miracle. The peculiar necessity of elaboration in Mr Irving's case is shown by the lamentable fiasco he made on the only occasion on which he *did* appear before a metropolitan audience in an unelaborated part. We refer to his performance of Joseph Surface, on the occasion of Mr Buckstone's benefit at Drury Lane, when he was distinctly the weakest member of the whole cast of the "School for Scandal."

The last point to which we shall allude is his much-vaunted TASTE. "In the large," if the expression is allowable, this quality must be granted him. He has the very obvious taste to play "Macbeth" without Locke's music, and the barbarous choruses introduced by Davenant; and he has the taste to do what Macready attempted before him, namely, to substitute Shakespeare's "Richard III." for Colley Cibber's. So far, his taste is certainly praiseworthy, though it is merely a compliance with the spirit of the age, which is beginning, theoretically at least, to prefer classic purity to crude barbarisms. When we come to minor points—the points on which an actor's reputation must largely depend—the case is altered. Here his taste is, to say the least of it, questionable. We need not again refer to the grosser absurdities of his performances, which proceed, perhaps, as much from physical necessity as from bad taste. His tendency to carry realism to a ludicrous extreme cannot, however, be thus excused. It proceeds from the bad taste of being unable to recognise the limits of his own powers. In the hands of a heaven-born actor like Salvini, realism is impressive, though even he now and then carried it beyond the bounds of good taste. In the hands of Mr Irving it became merely ludicrous. Even genius should be cautious in its attempts at realistic effect—mere talent should eschew them altogether, except in very minor instances. Realism by its very nature gravitates towards the ridiculous, and it is only the firmest artistic sense, and the rarest powers of execution that can keep the two apart. As instances of Mr Irving's "taste" in matters of text, we may allude again to the excisions from the part of Hamlet before

mentioned, and to the fact that in the provinces he cuts out of the part of Polonius the famous and admirable speech to Laertes in Act I, scene 3. Even when he hits upon a good and original idea, he has not the taste to abstain from running it to the death. The silent pause, for instance, in the tent scene in "Richard III.," where he walks up and down the tent, warms his hands by the fire, and looks out over the camp through the tent door, was in all respects an admirable conception, but was prolonged to a most inartistic, and almost painful extent. His return to melodrama in "The Lyons Mail" is in our opinion one of the best pieces of taste he has yet shown.



MELODRAMAT.

We have now passed in review the principal histrionic virtues with which Mr Irving is credited. In most points we have been forced to differ from his eulogists. But we repeat that all these particular strictures form no part of our main argument, and are of comparatively minor importance. Our contention is, that Mr Irving can neither walk nor talk like a normal human being, and thus could not be so much as a tolerable actor, even if he had all these lesser talents and a hundred more to boot. Our theory re-

garding him may be summed up as follows, and we believe that, when the first blush of fashionable fame is over, the generally received theory will be some-

what similar :—Mr Irving possesses, in spite of physical defects, the makings of an excellent actor. He might have been unsurpassed in certain lines of comedy and melodrama, but it is questionable whether he could ever have made much of tragedy. What he required was careful training in a good dramatic school, where he could have learnt proper stage-bearing, good elocution, and artistic self-containment, and where, moreover, he would have been warned against the besetting sins to which his peculiar physique and nervousness of temperament were always luring him. What he actually received was the slovenly, haphazard training of provincial and minor metropolitan theatres, until chance placed him on the way to fame. Here was the turning point of his career, and here the destructive—fatally destructive—system of long runs began to affect him, exaggerating his faults, while it rendered them ineradicable. Only one other agent was now wanting for his artistic ruin, and it came in the form of unexampled pecuniary success and indiscriminate adulation. Artists, as a race, are notoriously deficient in self-criticism, and none more so than actors. When an actor finds the public applauding his gravest faults, and the critics dubbing them beauties of the first water, he naturally begins to consider himself infallible, and gives the rein to his most inartistic proclivities. So has it been with Mr Irving. We say it with the sincerest regret, for with his artistic failure fails the last hope, for some time at least, of the establishment of a permanent school of Shakespearean acting in England.

Where lies the remedy for all this?—it will be asked. Will not other actors of Mr Irving's talent meet with

the same fate? All who have thought over these matters have long come to the conclusion that the only remedy lies in a national theatre, with good endowment, good traditions, good government. So long as actors have to trust for training to their own haphazard acquirements; so long as the one condition of their very existence is that they shall please a tasteless gallery, and still more tasteless stalls; so long as every artistic instinct in their nature is liable to be ruined by a two-hundred or even a thousand nights' run; so long will histrionic talent, especially of the loftier orders, be unavoidably doomed to the same destiny which has destroyed the unquestionable gifts of Mr Henry Irving.



A RECOGNITION OF GENIUS.

A LETTER
CONCERNING
MR HENRY IRVING

ADDRESSED TO

E. R. H.



“Good breeding lies in human nature, and is due from all men
towards all men.”—CARLYLE.

EDINBURGH.
THE EDINBURGH PUBLISHING COMPANY.
LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.
GLASGOW: J. MENZIES & CO.

1877.

PRICE FOURPENCE.

NEW BOOKS 'AND NEW EDITIONS.

Ready this day, Crown 8vo, Cloth, 448 pp., Price 5s.

Brown as a Berry:

A NOVEL.

New and Revised Edition. By GERTRUDE DOUGLAS.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

“ ‘Brown as a Berry’ is a novel of altogether exceptional merit. It is strong in plot, in incident, in the manner in which the action is developed, and especially in the conception and delineation of character. The tale is one, not so much of Scotch life, as of life in Scotland, with some very decidedly Scotch personages introduced. . . . On the whole, ‘Brown as a Berry’ is a most enjoyable novel, which deserves, and will doubtless have, more than an ephemeral fame.”—*Scotsman*.

“Thyrza Rutherford is a heroine of a better type than nine-tenths of the mawkish or hoydenish young women who do duty in that capacity in modern novels. She is *naïve* and unselfish, passionate yet pure, and just such a growth as might have been expected from a wholesome yet uncultivated soil. Briefly,—for we cannot describe such minute and fleeting traits as give charm to the undeveloped character of a girl of seventeen,—she is, from the time we make her acquaintance, as she jumps from her school-room window, a neglected girl in a French pension, to that in which we find her learning her capacities for love and suffering at the hands of Ferrier and the Rev. Mr Dods, qualified to engross the interest of those who read her history. . . . We part from the author with gratitude; and as to the heroine, may say with Rattray, ‘She is a bonny canty bit body, for as brown as she is in the skin. And, indeed, I’m no surprised at the meenister. I could hae fancied her mysel!’”—*Athenæum*.

In Crown 8vo, 96 pp., Price 1s.

A Book about House Work:

A Convenient Manual for Mistresses and Maids; with useful Hints and Receipts in the various departments of House-keeping. By Mrs GEORGE CUPPLES, Author of “The Stocking-Knitter’s Manual,” “Book of Counterpanes,” etc., etc.

“In this volume the author furnishes a deal of information for mistresses and maids which, if widely known and put to good use, would do much to set a limit to the ever-growing complaints which one hears about the difficulty of getting good servants, and the still greater difficulty of keeping such once they are got. . . . The whole duty of the general servant, the housemaid, the laundrymaid, the nurserymaid, and that terrible functionary the cook, are here pretty clearly explained.”—*Dunfermline Journal*.

A LETTER
CONCERNING
MR HENRY IRVING

ADDRESSED TO

E. R. H.

“Good breeding lies in human nature, and is due from all men
towards all men.”—CARLYLE.

EDINBURGH :
THE EDINBURGH PUBLISHING COMPANY.
LONDON : SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.
GLASGOW : J. MENZIES & CO.

1877.

A LETTER CONCERNING
MR HENRY IRVING

ADDRESSED TO

E. R. H.

November 2, 1877.

SIR,—During the last few weeks, playgoers in certain of our leading towns have been made aware of the existence of a pamphlet, consisting of an examination of the claims of Mr Irving to the eminence he has attained as an actor. This production may or may not have been successful; but if successful, it is more a testimony to the popularity of the actor than to the pungency of the “criticism,” which is neither truthful nor brilliant. The public are so deeply interested in Mr Irving, that anything devoted to the subject of his impersonations is bound to receive a certain amount of notice.

Now, this pamphlet is not fair. It is almost wholly a mere *ex parte* attack, written by one whose extraordinary thesis is, that “Mr Irving is one of the worst actors that ever trod the British stage in so-called ‘leading’ characters,” and who, to prove that thesis, is guilty of the grossest exaggeration, as well as of very disingenuous suppression of material facts.

Of course, there was a large extent of good which

the writer of the pamphlet was compelled, in common honesty, to concede to Mr Irving. He is forced to confess that his *Digby Grant* is "excellent,"—that his "first performances of *Mathias* in 'The Bells' were certainly wonderful,"—that "even up to his first appearance as *Hamlet*, his faults had not grown up in him to any morbid extent,"—that originality "in a certain sense" "cannot be denied him,"—that "he is possessed of a spirit of innovation which is not always misdirected,"—that "some of his readings are ingenious,"—that he is an "intellectual" actor,—that his fencing in "Hamlet" is "admirable,"—"that the combat in 'Macbeth' is particularly well-managed,"—that he is entitled to the merit of "elaboration,"—and that "he has the taste to substitute Shakespeare's 'Richard III.' for Colley Cibber's." But even this modicum of praise is very grudgingly accorded, and generally qualified by an accompanying sneer. In fact, there is obvious throughout the pamphlet a decided *animus* against the artist who is the subject of it, and whose services to the Drama, as well as the high reputation he enjoys, should have earned for him criticism certainly of a courteous, if not favourable kind.

My object may be very briefly stated. I have no intention of doing for Mr Irving the reverse of what this pamphleteer has done for him. I am convinced that indiscriminate praise would be as distasteful to him as indiscriminate blame. My only desire is to counteract, as far as possible, such false impressions as may have been conveyed by a perusal of this pamphlet. I, like the writer of that pro-

duction, have no personal knowledge of Mr Irving, and have no personal end to serve. I am an admirer of his honest work ; and while his defects as an actor are not disallowed, something at least should be put forward on the other side. I had, on first perusing the pamphlet I refer to, but one feeling, and that feeling one of indignation, that anything so thoroughly prejudiced should have been advanced by a writer laying claim to the honourable designation of "critic." To this feeling I am now anxious to give expression, though without falling, I trust, into the extreme of extravagance observable in the language of Mr Irving's latest censor.

I will take up this gentleman's contentions one by one.

He opens with the thoroughly erroneous statement, that "no actor of this, or indeed of any other age, has been so much or so indiscriminately belauded as Mr Irving." Mr Irving has, undoubtedly, had his hearty eulogists, both in the metropolis and the provinces ; but our pamphleteer is a living testimony to the fact that he has had his (literary) enemies. As a matter of fact, it would be far more correct to say, that "no actor of this, or indeed of an other age, has been so much or so indiscriminately traduced" as Mr Irving. Certainly, no one has been more loudly or eloquently blamed by those who did not and do not admire his acting. If "certain critics have ransacked their by no means limited vocabulary in the search for words in which to express his greatness," they have been equally assiduous in discovering epithets of an uncomplimentary nature. But that

they have done so is, after all, only one more proof of the remarkable character of Mr Irving's impersonations. The very vituperation he has aroused is only an additional testimony to the originality of his conceptions; and, so far, is a distinct compliment to his peculiar powers. It is only incompetence or commonplace that escapes detraction. The higher the flight taken, the more numerous the arrows that attempt to bring you down.

"For more than five years," continues our pamphleteer, "Mr Irving has been the 'bright particular star' of the British dramatic firmament. Night after night he has filled the dingy old Lyceum. . . . In the provinces he has met with the same success. . . . Men of science, men of learning, poets, philosophers, vie with each other in singing his praises. Bishops eulogise him in after-dinner speeches." Well, what of that? Is not that rather an argument in Mr Irving's favour? To be admired by the admired—*laudari a viris laudatis*—is not that a distinction to be envied? If Mr Irving is so highly estimated by the most able and most cultivated men of the time, would it not seem to show that he must be worthy of the estimation? If Mr Irving admittedly fills big theatres to suffocation, does not the presumption follow that he can hardly be "one of the worst actors that ever trod the British stage?" Our pamphleteer admits that among Mr Irving's admirers are the cream of the intellect of the land. If so, all I can say is, that the admiration of a Huxley, a Gladstone, a Tennyson, and a Blackie, is not to be despised, nor the testimony of bishops to be disre-

garded. They prove at least that if Mr Irving is not a perfect actor (and was there ever one?), he is a highly distinguished one, and one whose performances are worthy of study and earnest consideration. Mere eccentricity would not arouse the very unusual excitement which has resulted and still results from Mr Irving's appearances,—an excitement which has even enabled inferior actors to enhance their popularity by burlesquing the salient points of their master. No amount of puffing, however well directed,—no amount of advertising, however well arranged,—could (had it been attempted), have aroused the universal interest which is evinced in his performances. I am driven, therefore, to the conclusion, either that the pamphleteer is right, or that society as a body is wrong; and the former must forgive me, if, with all due appreciation of his cleverness, I prefer to take my place among the latter.

But to go more particularly into the charges which this writer brings against the actor. To begin with, he denies by implication that Mr Irving can either “move or speak like a normal, rational human being.” His gait is criticised as awkward, and his pronunciation as defective. His figure is characterized as “weak” and “loosely built,” and his face as “very limited” in the range of its expression. Now, it is a delicate matter to describe the personal appearance of any one, and especially of a public man. Most people of good taste would shrink from it; still, it is sometimes unavoidable, and as our pamphleteer has not shrunk from it, neither can I. And I confess

at the outset, that Mr Irving, in physique, is not conspicuously well fitted for the more heroic parts of tragedy. Physique, however, is not everything, even in heroic parts; and many of our great tragedians have not been men of unusual breadth and substance. Nor is it entirely necessary that they should be—it may sometimes be of advantage when they are, but it is by no means indispensable. The great thing to have is—*genius*. The possessor of that can create effects from which not even a “weak, loosely built” frame can detract very largely, if at all.

Now Mr Irving’s figure, as it happens, is for many parts particularly suitable. Who shall say it is unfitted to that of the much-meditating *Hamlet*? Who shall say it is unfitted to that of the remorseful *Mathias*? Has it even been found to take from the kingly dignity of *Charles I.*? Mr Irving certainly has mannerisms, and marked ones; but can we point to any great actor who had not? We have all read of John Kemble’s; and are Macready’s and Charles Kean’s forgotten? But surely it is only a one-sided criticism which fastens upon minor blots, and suffers them to overspread the whole description. This is but microscopic work.

“Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne’er was, nor is, nor e’er shall be.”

As to not speaking like a “rational human being,” the British public is perhaps the best judge of that. Mr Irving has for many years delighted that public, and Mr Irving is, if we are not deceived, a scholar and a gentleman; certainly he can write good English.

Let those who witness Mr Irving’s acting, look

first at the general effect. They leave the theatre in a condition of unmistakeable wonder and admiration at the actor's varied power. The *tout ensemble* has impressed them. Surely that is all that is required? But still more may be said. Mr Irving is so far from being invariably unintelligible in speech, that many and many are the occasions on which by a single tone he strikes a hundred chords of feeling. So far is he from being invariably ungainly in his motions, that many and many are the situations in which, by a single step or stride, he expresses more than some would be able to express in half-a-dozen speeches. So far is he from being invariably comical in gesture, that many and many are the times in which, by a lifting of the much-abused eyebrows, or by a movement of the nervous hands, he conveys a meaning hitherto undreamt of. If his voice is, as our critic says, "naturally harsh," all the greater credit must be his for doing what he does with it. If his figure is, as our critic declares, weak and loosely built, it is all the more wonderful that he is able to create the illusions that he does. If his motions are, as our critic avers, so exceedingly ungainly, how is it that they are watched night after night with positively breathless interest? An actor who can attain success as *Digby Grant*, *Mathias*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III.*, *Cardinal Richelieu*, and *King Charles I.*, can hardly be very expressionless in feature. I wonder if our critic has ever seen Mr Irving as *Philip of Spain*, in Tennyson's "Queen Mary?"

Now for the minor counts of the indictment.

Allowing to Mr Irving the praise of "intellectu-

ality," and even of "originality" in some degree, the writer again falls foul of his "picturesqueness" and "vividness," which he describes as "moving and standing and attitudinizing on the stage, as no actor, and, what is worse, no human being ever did before." The uncritical character of the observation is at once apparent. What does the writer want? Does he wish to reduce Mr Irving to his (the writer's) dimensions, or to those of an histrionic automaton? Would he, if deliberately asked the question, prefer a *Richard* with a level elocution, and stereotyped strides and gestures, to the really "picturesque" and "vivid" impersonation of Mr Irving? If he would not, why all this prolonged sneering at personal peculiarities? The question is, Does Mr Irving call up before us the visions of the men he undertakes to represent? If he does, and if in doing so he makes use of certain tones and motions, it is very unprofitable to be for ever complaining of those tones and motions. They are Mr Irving's means towards an end, and if that end is reached successfully, the means by which it is attained must be legitimate. I do not deny that some people trained in the old school of tragedy are liable to be a little shocked occasionally by Mr Irving's sayings and doings. But that is no fault of Mr Irving's. He starts confessedly from no other standpoint than that which his own intelligence suggests. He throws tradition aside, and gives us the fruit of his own thought and study. The result, we are bound to say, is, in the majority of instances, remarkably successful. Sneers may be directed against special points, and indeed, the human

mind being constituted as it is, exception will always be taken to the greatest works of art. But this does not prevent us from recognizing that Mr Irving's performances are, as a whole, singularly "picturesque" and "vivid," and frequently by reason of the very peculiarities against which our pamphleteer directs his peculiar wit.

A large portion of the pamphlet under notice is occupied in decrying the "psychological subtlety" which has been attributed to Mr Irving. Granting that this quality may justifiably be accorded to the actor's "studies of murder, mesmerism, and nightmare," the writer goes on to analyse unfavourably his impersonations of Shakespeare's characters. It is not necessary to follow him in all his wanderings. I will take up simply what he says about Mr Irving's *Hamlet* and *Richard III.*

The charge against the former is that we get in Mr Irving's conception no indication of the Prince's madness, whether real or assumed (and the pamphleteer is quite convinced that it was either one or the other); that in the scene with *Polonius* Mr Irving is rude and impertinent; and that in the scene with *Ophelia* he is like a tyrannical guardian ordering off a girl to school. This, it would appear, is the sum-total that our "critic" has to urge against Mr Irving's *Hamlet*. It is not a very formidable indictment, but it may as well be answered. Of course, the scene with the Queen in her closet is, by accident, not alluded to. As regards Mr Irving's conception of the Prince's character, so long as it is psychologically consistent, we surely have no right to question it. You

may take what view of *Hamlet* you please—you may represent him as mad, or as feigning madness, or as merely weakly hysterical—with the hysteria of a fine mind overthrown by its contact with the supernatural and its contests with itself. Any one of these conceptions could easily be defended from the poet's text. Mr Irving's conception I take to be the last of those put forward; and, whether you agree with it or not, you must acknowledge that it is worked out artistically and consistently. That is the praise which all the leading critics give to Mr Irving, that even where his actions are most opposed to ordinary received opinion, they are invariably reasonable, and invariably realised with effect. As for the scenes with *Polonius* and *Ophelia*, it is by no means true that Mr Irving's *Hamlet* either insults the one or bullies the other. Accept Mr Irving's idea of the Prince's disposition, and his conduct to *Polonius* is quite natural. He regards him as a tedious old fool sent to spy upon him, and takes a keen delight in throwing dust into his eyes. He is in a state of high excitement, and in no mood to exchange compliments even with *Ophelia's* father; the less inclined to do so, doubtless, because he *is* *Ophelia's* father. Towards *Ophelia* again, his feeling is even more acute and overstrained. Not only is his mind unhinged, but his passions are thoroughly roused; and the discovery of her complicity in the trick played upon him, excites in him a whirlwind of very natural indignation, mingled with the pity and the sorrow born of hardly-controllable love. This we take to be Mr Irving's view of the situation, and

it is perfectly defensible, and therefore perfectly legitimate. And this we take from Mr Irving's own words, as written in an early number of the *Nineteenth Century*. Coming up to the point where *Hamlet* discovers that his interview with *Ophelia* has been spied upon by her Father and the King, Mr Irving writes :—

“ And now *Hamlet's* excitement reaches its greatest height. Goaded within and without, nay, dragged even by his own feelings in two opposite directions, in each of which he suspects he may have gone too far under the eyes of malignant witnesses, he is maddened by the thought that they are still observing him, and as usual, half in wild exultation, half by design, begins to pour forth more and more extravagant reproaches on his kind. He must not commit himself to his love, nor unbosom his hate, nor has he a moment's pause in which to set in order a continued display of random lunacy. As usual, passion and preconceived gloomy broodings abundantly supply him with declamation, which may indicate a deep meaning, or be mere madness, according to the ears that hear it ; while through all his bitter ravings there is visible the anguish of a lover forced to be cruel, and of a destined avenger almost beside himself with the horrors of his provocation and his task. The shafts fly wildly, and are tipped with cynic poison ; the bow from which they are sped is a strong and constant, though anxious nature, steadily, though with infinite excitement, bent upon the one great purpose fate has imposed upon it. The fitful excesses of his closing speech are the twangings of the bow from which the arrow of avenging destiny shall one day fly straight to the mark.”

Now, why does our critic run away with the notion that his idea of *Hamlet* is of necessity the only true one ? There are people who form their ideas of Shakespeare from the plays the poet wrote. Hazlitt and Lamb were such ; there are other people who form their opinions of Shakespeare's men and

women from the traditions of the stage ; and in this class, I fear, is the author of the pamphlet under review. Mr Irving goes to the fountain-head for inspiration—our Mr Critic to the playhouse, where conceptions, once vivid, when presented by their creators, become, indeed, “stale, flat, and unprofitable,” when filtered through the mediocrity of commonplace minds. Here is a version which, to thousands of students of Shakespeare, reveals new beauties and new thoughts, is more human and more unstagy ; and pray let us give it all the praise it deserves. Pray let us welcome it for what it really is—a new contribution to the study of the most wonderful imaginative character ever conceived by man. And we are not singular in our opinion. Dr Edward Dowden, no mean authority, in his *Shakspeare Primer*, has lately written this : “And once again an English Shakspeare actor of distinction has appeared in the person of Mr Irving. More than 300 hundred years after Shakspeare’s birth, his fame seems still in its great morning.”

Mr Irving’s *Richard III.* the pamphleteer calls a “cheap Mephistopheles,” and says Mr Irving “fails to convey any impression either of the tremendous mental power of Shakespeare’s *Richard*, or of the dignity which should be apparent through all the bodily deformity.” Now, this is arrant dogmatism. To talk of the absolute dignity of *Richard* under every circumstance is nonsense.

“Why, I can smile and murder whiles I smile,
And cry “Content” to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.

I can add colours to the chameleon,
 Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
 And set the murderous Machiavel to school."

The *Richard* of the stage has hitherto been Colley Cibber's—a distinctly inferior personage to Shakespeare's, just as Shakespeare's is distinctly contrary to history's. Mr Irving's merit is that he has given us the *Richard* of the poet, with a fidelity which speaks volumes for his common sense, if not his "subtlety." The general effect is wonderfully fine, and entirely nullifies any attempt at hypercriticism, even had that hypercriticism any element of truth to recommend it.

So far, we have followed Mr Irving's critic in most, if not all, of his objections, and come now, and lastly, to the sentences in which he carefully sums up his theory. According to him, "Mr Irving possesses, in spite of physical defects, the makings of an excellent actor"—so that, if the worst come to the worst, Mr Irving can step from the eminence he occupies, and begin his career again with at least some hopes of success. This is sublime. The good man does not seem to see that Mr Irving has already "made much of tragedy"—unless, indeed, he does not regard *Hamlet* and *King Richard* as tragedy, or deliberately thinks that Mr Irving has failed in both! "What he required was careful training in a good dramatic school. . . . What he actually received was the slovenly haphazard training of provincial and minor metropolitan theatres." By the bye, which was the minor metropolitan theatre? and we have been under the impression all this time, that the hard work and varied experience of the provinces were

the best possible training for a modern actor ! What would our critic put in place of it ? "A National Theatre, with good endowment, good traditions, good government."

But this is merely twaddle. What has the *Theatre Français* done for French acting ? It has made it polished and rounded, to be sure, but it has made it uniform and dull. We do not say a National Theatre might not do good, under some conditions ; but if it were to do nothing more than train up our artists to be as like each other as two peas, it would not be worth much. To men like Mr Irving it would probably do irremediable harm, for it would repress their individuality, and make them mere followers of tradition. Art is not immutable, and it is the privilege of genius to be continually adding to its canons. It must be left to posterity to judge how far Mr Irving's contributions to these canons are to be permanent. Suppose that in the meantime they commend themselves, if not to our critic, at least to the good judgment of the best available judges ?

One more point referred to in the pamphlet remains to be discussed. We mean the occasional allusions to what the writer is good enough to call Mr Irving's "artistic failure." The pamphleteer is a little too hasty, we venture to say, in taking for granted that Mr Irving is, like the Caucasian, played out. "With his artistic failure, fails the hope, for some time at least, of the establishment of a permanent school of Shakesperean acting in England." There is something quaint in the impudence of this observation, which is at the same time remarkably at variance

with the writer's opening confession as to the tragedian's popularity. According to his own showing, Mr Irving has "for five years been the 'bright particular star' of the British dramatic firmament." Has his reputation been lowered or raised in the course of these five years? Does he draw smaller or less cultivated or less admiring audiences than he did? The answer is obvious. His reputation has grown day by day, until it is almost impossible to imagine it more splendid than it is. Are there any signs of its approaching decadence? None whatever. Mr Irving is now making his second tour of the provinces, and he is being received everywhere with even greater acclamation than he was received with last year. Why should he not go on as he has begun, accumulating success upon success? There are certain lines of the drama in which he has no living equal. By virtue of that very qualification alone he will maintain his position as the leading actor of our stage. No living native artist has so wide a range; and he could therefore maintain, by reason only of his versatility, the high position which he has secured as an exponent of Shakespeare and the romantic drama. Regarded from all sides, he is, without exception, the foremost dramatic artist of his country, and as such he need have no fear of being neglected in his lifetime, or of being forgotten by succeeding generations. He cannot be forgotten. The man who has played *Hamlet* for two hundred consecutive nights, to crowded audiences, has made a mark upon his time which cannot be erased.

And now, sir, I have done. Perhaps you may

know the distinguished writer of this pamphlet, and the companion who assisted him in his novel scheme. Perhaps they are both young men, who may hereafter look with regret upon their questionable work. If this result should be attained, some unexpected good may yet be done them. I hope so; and as they have deliberately attempted to ridicule an artist who has given pleasure and instruction to hundreds of thousands of his countrymen, I beg them, for the sake of any dear or honourable ties they may have, to commit to memory, and bear in mind these words—"Good-breeding lies in human nature, and is due from all men towards all men."

I am,

Sir,

Yours obediently,

YORICK.

NEW BOOKS AND NEW EDITIONS.

Ready this day, Part I., Price 6d. (Re-issue).

The Book of Scottish Poems.

"If one may judge from the first number of this new work, it is safe to predict for it a hearty welcome and a wide circulation. . . . This manner of dealing with the various authors and their works is certainly well calculated to give a life-like interest to the book."—*Glasgow Herald*.

In One Handsome Volume, Extra Crown 8vo, Gilt Top, Price 7s. 6d.

The Book of Scottish Story:

Historical, Traditionary, Legendary, Imaginary, and Humorous.
Selected from the Works of STANDARD SCOTTISH AUTHORS.

"A capital work, as full of interest as an egg is full of meat. . . . It is a capital book for the library, and excellent to lie on the table of a waiting-room, to carry to the fireside, or to take on a journey."—*Publishers' Circular*.

"Those who delight in reading stories will be charmed with this volume."—*Literary World*.

"We find in it the best stories of the best story-writers that Scotland has in recent times produced. . . . The book is excellent reading for holiday times and odd half-hours, and will be especially prized by Scots abroad who hold dear the memory of all that is most characteristic of later Scottish life."—*Scotsman*.

Published also in Two Vols., Fancy Boards, price 2s. each.

In Crown 8vo, New and Revised Edition, with Classified Index, Price 5s.

The Book of Scottish Anecdote:

Humorous, Social, Legendary, and Historical.

By ALEXANDER HISLOP.

"This BOOK OF SCOTTISH ANECDOTE is peculiarly tempting, its contents are so various, so interesting, and so amusing."—*Spectator*.

"A book such as this has several merits exclusively its own. One can be instructed in many of the peculiarities of his country, while he is amused by the sallies of humour which adorn its pages. FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERSONAL OR SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENT IT IS INVALUABLE. You cannot read it for five minutes without being pleased, interested, or instructed."—*Edinburgh Courant*.

Published also in Two Vols., Fancy Boards, price 2s. each.

NEW BOOKS AND NEW EDITIONS.

In Crown 8vo, 448 pp., Price 5s.

Kennedy's Colonial Travel:

A Narrative of a Four Years' Tour through Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Tasmania. By DAVID KENNEDY, Jun., a Member of the Kennedy Family of Scottish Vocalists.

"The lively episodes of the ups and downs of Australian life, of exciting drives across country, and halts at hamlets and townships which the ordinary tourist would pass by unnoticed, and all the thousand incidents that crop up in the path of the wandering minstrel of modern times, give animation even to routes which recent books of travel have made but too familiar to us all."—*Graphic*.

In Fcap. 8vo, Boards, Price 2s.

Shetland Fireside Tales:

A Romantic Love Story of Last Century; with Tales, Legends, and Traditions of the Islands. By a NATIVE AUTHOR.

"Contain an amount of real human interest far greater than is ordinarily to be found in books of stories."—*Scotsman*.

"This is a most enjoyable book."—*Orkney-Herald*.

Cabinet Edition, 3s. 6d.; Household Edition, 2s. 6d., with 13 full-page Illustrations; People's Edition, fancy boards, 2s.

The Gaberlunzie's Wallet.

By JAMES BALLANTINE.

"Mr Ballantine's famous book. . . . Laden with overflowing humour and delightful song."—*Glasgow News*.

"One of the most entertaining works Scotland has produced."—*K&Lso Mail*.

Second Thousand. Crown 8vo, Illustrated Cover, Price 6d.

The Bankruptcy of Brittain Brothers.

"An amusing bit of banter on the present state of Europe, and the disruption of parties in this country. The description of Sandy, one of the partners of Brittain Brothers, is capital."—*Bookseller*, June 1877.

THE EDINBURGH PUBLISHING COMPANY.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA

000 334 365 4

Book 100
Apr 1935
LONDON BOOK CO.

334 W Broadway

